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ABSTRACT

A description is given of a cooperative teacher education program offered by Peabody College of Vanderbilt University and Fisk University, a historically black institution. The program is designed for minority students who wish to be certified in elementary and special education. These students spend their junior year and the first semester of their senior year at Peabody where these programs are offered. The students return to Fisk for the last semester of their senior year and graduate with a degree and certification from Fisk. Funds are provided by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education. A program coordinator at Peabody helps the Fisk students to adjust to the predominantly white campus and helps the Peabody faculty as they work with the students to smooth the transition to the campus. The collaboration enables Fisk University to provide courses that would otherwise be a severe strain on its resources. (JD)

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INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF MINORITY TEACHERS: A Collaborative Program Between Peabody/Vanderbilt University and Fisk University

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Increasing the supply of Minority Teachers:
A Collaborative Program Between
Peabody/Vanderbilt University and Fisk University

The Problem

The National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education (Winkler, 1985) states that minority teachers comprise only 12.5 percent of the K-12 teachers even though minority students constitute 26 percent of the public school population. The Commission predicts by the end of the decade that the figures will be closer to 5 per cent and 30 per cent respectively.

Decline in Minority Teachers

"Teaching, traditionally, has been the major occupation of college-educated Black Americans. In 1950, teaching accounted for nearly half of Black professional workers, compared to less than one quarter of White professionals. The concentration of Blacks in the teaching profession in the United States was due in large measure to the segregated schooling in the South and the fact that very few other occupations were open to Blacks. In the mid-1960s, as Black and White Schools were consolidated to meet school desegregation mandates, we witnessed dismissals of the thousands of Black teachers and the virtual elimination of Black principals. By the time court and Federal actions were initiated in the late 1960's and early 1970's to prevent further displacements, massive damage had already been done" (Cole, 1986, p.326).

Cole (1986) continues by indicating that a new danger exists for eliminating Black educators from the school systems the use of measurement to deny access to the profession. Teacher competency tests have been established in thirty-eight states for entry into teacher preparation programs, certification, and continued employment (Anrig, 1986). From an in-depth analysis of ten states, Smith reports evidence that failure rates on competency tests for Blacks range from 33 to 88 per cent. Cooper

(1985) found in her study of eleven southern states, "that between 1980 and 1984 in states that had teacher-competency tests, there was a 6.4 per cent decline of Black teachers in comparison to a decline of less than one per cent in those states without teacher competency tests." Gifford (1985) indicates that the serious problem created by low-minority pass rates on the NTE and other standardized competency tests ". . . is the prospect that when minority - group pupils, especially those contemplating teaching careers, learn that many prospective minority teachers are judged not good enough to teach, they may lose confidence in their own abilities and conclude that the teaching profession is 'off limits' to minorities" (p. 24).

Blacks are the least likely segment of the population to choose teaching as a career according to a 1984 National Center for Education Statistics Report. Between 1976 and 1983, the percentage of bachelor's degrees in education awarded to Blacks declined by 52 per cent. Darling-Hammond (1984) explains "Academically talented women and minorities, who were once restricted to teaching as a professional option, are now choosing other occupations that promise greater financial rewards, more opportunities for advancement and better working conditions" (p. 6).

"In 1981, for example, only 6 per cent (8,400) of the 47,000 blacks who received baccalaureates that year were qualified to teach. However, the number of blacks who actually enter the teaching profession is even smaller" (Garibaldi, 1986, p. 392). In 1981 only 200 of the 5,500 teachers certified to teach in Florida were black (Brown 1982), and the number of North Carolina's entry-level black teachers declined from 723 in 1977 to 403 in 1980 (Schlechty and Vance, 1981). In Louisiana, the three predominantly black public institutions graduated 662 black education students in 1976, but, by 1983 only 217 received education degrees. In Tennessee, less than 3% of the teacher education graduates are black. Tennessee State University in Nashville will graduate only 3 black teacher education majors in 1988.

The need for black teachers is crucial.

"Black students desperately need Black role models for development of self-

esteem and identity. They also need counselors who can empathize with their situation as minorities and provide guidance in a society where racism still is alive and well. Majority students need the presence of Black teachers and administrators in order to learn to respect Blacks in roles of authority and to see them as examples of competent professionals. In this pluralistic society, and especially in one of our major institutions of socialization, the need for interaction with diverse groups is paramount. The demise of the Black teacher will not only have a negative impact on the Black community, but also on the growth and development of our nation" (Cole, 1984, p. 334).

Teacher Education Reform

The teacher education reform over the past several years has underlined the central role that teachers must play in any effort to improve schooling in the United States (Graham, 1987).

The demands for reform of teacher education have come in many shapes and sizes, but there appear to be seven general themes that cover most of the proposals for change:

1. Various measures of intellectual capability and academic achievement should be used to control entry to teacher education and to teaching so as to increase the quality of the teaching corps.

2. Prospective teachers should have a strong grounding in the liberal arts and should have substantial coursework in the subjects they teach. Students who want to teach in high schools, and perhaps all teachers, should major in an academic subject.

3. Professional education courses should be more sophisticated and

more demanding. In particular, courses dealing with teaching methods should incorporate the findings of recent research.

4. Preservice teacher education should be extended to one full year of coursework beyond the time the person receives the bachelor's degree. Some such proposals urge that teacher preparation stretch over the given year period and others argue that teacher education should not commence until after undergraduate work has been completed.

5. Professional education should involve more field experiences and semester-long practice teaching experiences.

6. States should develop ways to secure teacher certification that would not require attendance in conventional preparation programs. These "alternative certification" paths would seek to attract to teaching persons of exceptional talent.

7. Induction programs for first year teachers or special schools for teacher training within public school systems should be developed in order to ensure that new teachers are able to put into effect and build upon what they learn about teaching in college" (Austin, Goldman and Hawley, forthcoming).

The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy that issued its report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers For The 21st Century, and the Holmes Group that prepared a report, Tomorrow's Teachers, point to a shortage of well prepared and compassionate teachers during the coming decade. However, they point out that for black teachers,

the need is particularly acute. Graham (1987) states that black children have to have some black teachers to provide valuable role models as successful members of society. "But black teachers can serve that function only if they are successful (and, for teachers, that means academically successful, so that they can, indeed, contribute to the education of the young)" (Graham, 1987, p. 599).

Most teacher education reform reports recommend post-baccalaureate degrees or training in professional education as a condition for certification. Many state legislatures have adopted such reforms, but studies show that the number of black students receiving post-baccalaureate degrees is declining. In 1976-77, blacks received 6.7 percent of the master's degrees awarded in the U. S., but by 1980-81, the proportion had dropped to 5.8 per cent (Thomas, 1986). If this teacher education reform is further implemented, then the decline in black teachers may be even greater.

Peabody College of Vanderbilt University has an opportunity through a collaborative program with Fisk University, a historically black private institution to recruit and prepare well qualified black teachers to enter the schools of the nation. Peabody/Vanderbilt is currently involved in three other activities that seek to address the minority teacher shortage. Peabody has increased its minority recruitment efforts including financial aid; it is engaged in a collaborative effort among three predominately white universities and six historically black colleges and universities; and it is involved in providing assistance to a national Governors' Association project to develop state policies in the South that address the sources of the decline in the number of black teachers.

Description of the project

Support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education has been received to establish a cooperative teacher preparation program involving Peabody College, Vanderbilt's school of education and human development, and Fisk University a historically black institution. This is the type of program that should easily be replicated by other universities, if the program's effectiveness can be demonstrated.

How does the program work?

Fisk University is one of the nation's best known historically black universities. It provides its students with a comprehensive liberal arts education. Like many historically black colleges and universities, Fisk offers teacher certification in secondary teaching fields but not in elementary or special education. This is due to the lack of resources needed to offer certification in elementary and special education that are significantly greater than in secondary teaching fields. To offer elementary and special education courses would require the addition of a number of faculty members, since many of the courses such as practica and student teaching are labor intensive and require many hours of faculty time. Paradoxically, the shortage of black teachers is most severe in elementary schools and in special education.

For more than a year, Fisk and Peabody/Vanderbilt faculty and administrators have been at work on designing a program that would serve to allow elementary students at Fisk University to take their teacher preparation courses at Peabody College, Vanderbilt. As noted, Fisk, like many small liberal arts colleges, cannot offer the range of courses and practice experiences students need to secure teacher certification in elementary and special education. Peabody, of course, provides such courses. Moreover, the presence of Fisk students in Peabody classes will enrich Peabody's program.

Fisk students will major in an academic discipline and satisfy their general distribution (liberal arts) requirements at Fisk. In the two semesters of their junior year and the first semester of their senior year, they will live on the Peabody campus and take the teacher preparation courses. During the first two years at Fisk, careful scheduling of prerequisite courses for teacher preparation and the general education courses will occur. Peabody courses rely heavily on current research and this fact earned them an Achievement Award from the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education in 1987. Moreover, the programs focus on the development of analytical and problem solving capabilities rather than on the learning of specific

techniques. Peabody's teacher preparation program is not vulnerable to the criticisms of narrowness and excessive vocationalism that has been leveled at many teacher preparation programs.

Redesigning the Teacher Preparation

Over the past four years the faculty of the Department of Teaching and Learning at Peabody, has been in the process of revising its elementary/early childhood teacher preparation program. During the past three years, they have received a grant from the Office of Education Research and Improvement to use research, problem solving and technology to make needed changes in the program.

After identifying the problems through formal and informal evaluation that our preservice students were having in practica and student teaching, a series of learning experiences was designed that would hopefully alleviate the problems. Research on effective teaching, teacher education and classroom management was reviewed and selected for use with the students. A series of videotapes of classroom scenes was developed for cognitive discrimination training prior to the time when preservice students would go into the classroom for practicum experiences. Descriptive vignettes that present classroom problem situations were developed to give preservice students an opportunity to solve the problems. Computer simulations were also prepared but had the advantage of including the research that supported the solution they chose.

Another aspect of the program was to prepare students with qualitative research skills (ethnographic techniques) that they might use for self analysis of their teaching in practica and student teaching settings. Video discs to further present classroom situations for problem solving were developed. One disc presents three methods of grouping for instruction--ability, interest, and cooperative. Expert teacher commentary is also included.

Another aspect of the program that meets the criticisms of teacher education programs is the close supervision that the students receive while doing their practica and the semester-long student teaching experiences. Seminars follow-up the weekly

observations and extended seminars are held during the initial and mid-semester weeks of student teaching.

Program Approval

The Peabody-Fisk collaborative program for elementary students has been approved for Teacher Certification and passed by the Tennessee State Board of Education. The Boards of Trust of both Universities have approved the program. It is anticipated that the Special Education program will soon be approved as well. While Fisk University is less than one mile from Vanderbilt, Fisk students will live on the Vanderbilt campus during the two or three semesters they are taking education-related courses. This will have the advantage of providing Fisk students with the opportunity to participate in a predominantly white setting and to develop the self-confidence that will derive from that experience. Of course, the mostly white Vanderbilt student body will benefit from its interaction with black Fisk students.

During the last semester of their senior year, the Fisk students will return to their campus to complete liberal arts requirements and to participate in the senior year and graduation activities. Their degrees and certification to teach will be awarded by Fisk University. The first group of students to participate in this program may come as early as the spring semester 1989.

The semester before Fisk students are to arrive on the Vanderbilt campus, a Peabody faculty member of the Department of Teaching and Learning or Special Education, who teaches in the program of the student's interest, will be assigned as an academic advisor. The student will have several meetings with the advisor during that semester to acquaint the student with the campus, the teacher preparation program and procedures and to pre-register the student for the courses to be taken the next semester. The student's advisor will remain the same throughout the program. Prior to the student's first semester on the campus, the advisor will assist the student in completing the necessary forms for screening into the teacher education program. The screening is based on successful completion of the foundations courses in education,

passing the basic skills test (which will be completed at Fisk before being permitted to enter the program), and attaining a satisfactory grade point average. A second screening will occur when the student applies for the student teaching semester.

When students enter Peabody as freshmen, they are assigned to a student academic leader who assists them in registering and becoming acquainted with the campus facilities. It is anticipated that this same procedure will be followed even though the Fisk students are not freshmen. Fisk students will be invited to join the teacher education association (STEA) and the education honoraries when they meet the requirements just as other students are.

A program coordinator, a well qualified experienced black teacher, serves as a role model and also a sounding board or advisor for the black students. She has a better perception of the problems the students may be facing as they enter a predominately white campus. The program coordinator also has the opportunity to pursue an advanced degree and become familiar with the programs and facilities of the campus. The coordinator is not intended to relieve the faculty of their responsibility of assisting the Fisk students in their adjustment to the campus. The program coordinator is a clinical faculty member who also assists the faculty by making them aware of ways in which they may make the transition to the Vanderbilt campus easier for the Fisk students.

We anticipate that the program will serve 10-15 students per year. (If that number seems small, it may be noted that this would be more black students than graduate from all but two of the state universities in Tennessee). However, as the program becomes operational it is anticipated that additional recruitment efforts may increase the number of interested students.

Recruitment of students

Special efforts are being made to recruit students who have a commitment to teaching to Fisk University. Some of funds from the project are used to develop brochures about the opportunities in teaching and video tapes that depict some of the

learning experiences that will be a part of the teacher preparation program.

Other recruitment strategies used include inviting minority students to Fisk and Vanderbilt to visit classes and to meet with faculty and other students in the program. Newspaper articles and radio programs such as "Vanderbilt Today" advertise the program.

The funding for three years from the Fund supports efforts to recruit students, coordinate (align) curricula, disseminate the results of the program, and provide counseling and advising assistance to the Fisk students involved. With respect to the last of these purposes, both universities recognize that Fisk students may have some difficulty adapting to Peabody/Vanderbilt even though they will come to us as a cohort that can provide support. Thus, we believe that it is important that the program will have a counselor/coordinator.

Vanderbilt Financial Support

Vanderbilt will make a substantial contribution to this program through its subsidy of the tuition of Fisk students. Vanderbilt will pay the difference between the tuition at Fisk and that of Vanderbilt for the courses taken in the teacher preparation program. This will amount to approximately 45 hours including a semester-long student teaching experience.

Statement of intended outcomes and evaluation

As a result of the implementation of the project, it is anticipated that the following outcomes will be achieved:

1. More well prepared black elementary and special education teachers will graduate from the Peabody/Fisk program and enter the teaching profession.

   Evaluation: A tabulation of the number of students graduating from the Peabody/Fisk program will determine whether the program has been successful in attracting more black students to teaching.

   A follow-up of the graduates will determine whether they entered the teaching profession.

An evaluation form will be sent in March of their first full year to the principal of the school where the graduate is teaching to determine how well the student was prepared. Graduates will also be sent at that time, a questionnaire to complete to give their perceptions of their preparation.

2. Black experienced teachers will provide good models for Peabody/Fisk preservice students through their role as program coordinator.

   Evaluation: Records will be kept of the number of times students seek the counseling and advising assistance from the program coordinator. The topics of these discussions will be categorized to determine what areas are of most concern and also to evaluate the effectiveness of the coordinator.

3. Black Fisk students will increase their self-confidence from living on the campus of a predominately white university that will enable them to enter school systems with confidence in their ability to teach.

   Evaluation: Interviews will be conducted and questionnaires completed by the students to determine their perceptions of their abilities. These will be conducted at the time of their entry into the program and after completion. Observations of their teaching performance will be completed during practica and student teaching settings.

4. Conversely, white students of Peabody/Vanderbilt will gain respect for black students as they interact with them in their teacher preparation programs and more informally on the campus.

   Evaluation: Once again interviews will be conducted and questionnaires completed by the students before the Fisk students arrive on campus and at the time of their completion of the program. A more objective instrument with a Likert scale will be utilized to evaluate their response to the program.

Project Staff:

Dr. Dorothy J. Skeel, Chair, Department of Teaching and Learning at Peabody will direct the program. She has been the principal investigator in the OERI project and has extensive experience in teacher preparation program. Her doctoral dissertation was

concerned with the selection of student teachers to work with culturally disadvantaged students.

Ms. Dolores Nicholson, is Director of Educational Programs at Fisk University and teacher of educational foundation courses. She will be Associate Director and coordinate the course work and advise students while they are at Fisk.

Mrs. Barbara Crawford is the Program Coordinator. She is a black, well qualified experienced teacher and assistant principal who is pursuing graduate work and coordinating the program and advising students and faculty in the transition of students from Fisk to Peabody.

Professor Dorothy J. Skeel, Chair, Teaching and Learning, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tn.

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ABSTRACT
Increasing the supply of Minority Teachers:
A Collaborative Program Between
Peabody/Vanderbilt University and Fisk University

The project is designed to implement a cooperative program between Peabody College of Vanderbilt University and Fisk University, a historically black institution, to provide teacher preparation courses for Fisk students in elementary and special education. Minority students from Fisk are recruited who would be interested in completing certification in elementary or special education, but are unable to do this at Fisk since these courses are costly for Fisk to provide.

Students in the program complete their first two years at Fisk and then come to Peabody during their junior year and the first semester of their senior year for their teacher preparation courses and student teaching. They live on the Peabody campus for these three semesters. This helps the students develop self-confidence and their skills of teaching. They then return to Fisk for the last semester of their senior year and graduate with a degree and certification from Fisk.

The funds for this project are provided by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education. A program coordinator who is a well qualified experienced black teacher pursuing an advanced degree at Peabody helps the Fisk students adjust to the predominately white campus and also helps the Peabody faculty as they work with the students to smooth the transition to the campus.

Peabody/Vanderbilt funds the difference between the Fisk and Vanderbilt tuition for approximately 45 hours for each student. The project director from Peabody and the associate director from Fisk are being supported by their respective institutions for their time devoted to this project.

The project is designed to increase the number of minority teachers who will enter the schools of the nation. This model should easily be implemented by other institutions.